



GLWA
Great Lakes Water Authority

THE CRISIS BENEATH US



The public health of our region is at stake...



The Great Lakes Water Authority serves nearly four million people across eight counties in Michigan. One of the oldest water systems in the country, GLWA's infrastructure contains pipelines that are more than 100 years old. And with approximately 800 miles of water transmission main in the system, with an average age of 72 years old, the increase in pipe failures across our service region is unavoidable. As these failures continue to mount, our system is facing a big, bold problem and we need a big, bold solution.

When a pipe breaks it is not just the infrastructure that feels the pressure, but more importantly, the people. As the provider of clean, safe drinking water for 40 percent of Michigan's population, GLWA recognizes our responsibility to balance system resiliency with affordability and ultimately, the protection of public health.

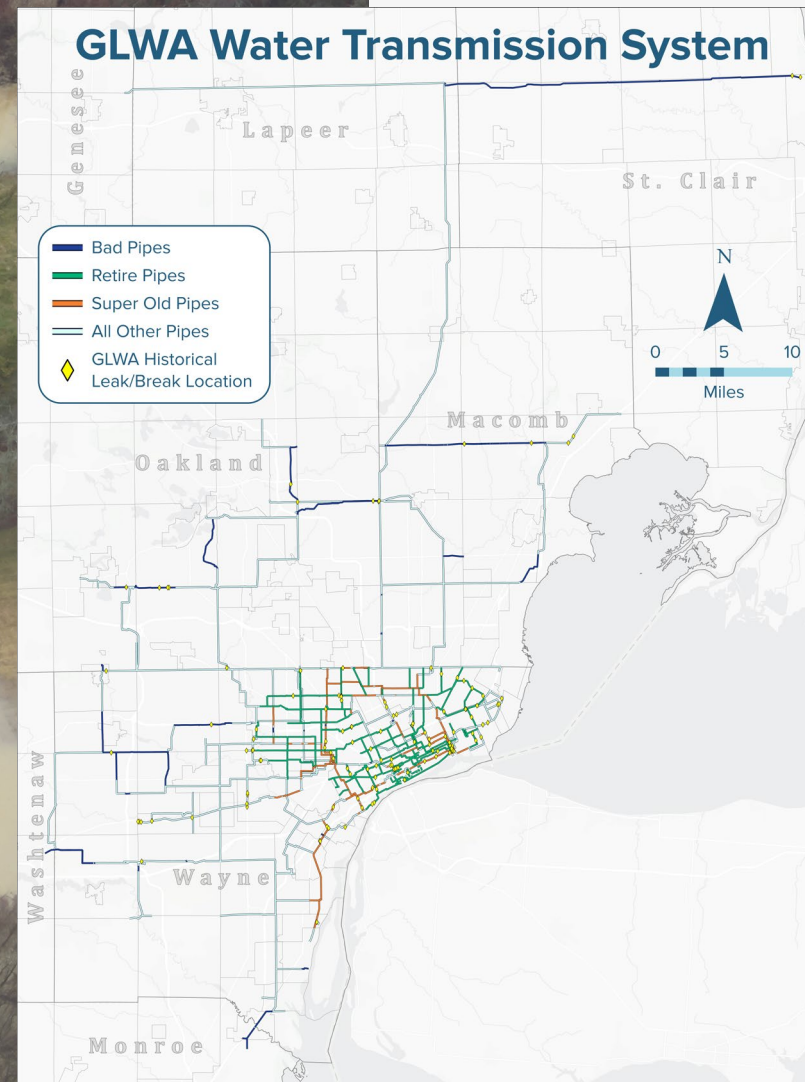
It is essential to our region, and the people we serve, that we explore funding opportunities to improve our water infrastructure for generations to come. And although this crisis is happening beneath our feet, we cannot continue to ignore the inevitable. It is our obligation to bring the pipes, and their true cost, both fiscal and human, to the surface.



THE PROBLEM

Bad pipes (1970s PCCP) are located throughout GLWA's service area

48-Inch Main Break in Farmington Hills, March 2026



Over 40% of GLWA's transmission mains need to be addressed



GLWA's water transmission system requires high-pressure large-diameter pipes to deliver water to your community – many of them need our attention now.

- Bad Pipes – 11 percent of the pipes are 1970's Prestressed Concrete Cylinder Pipe (PCCP) and are aging rapidly.
- Retire Pipes – 21 percent of the pipes can be retired (no more cost to maintain).
- Super Old Pipes – 9 percent are past their useful life.

THE IMPACT



120-Inch Main Break
Fort Gratiot, Michigan

Hundreds of thousands of residents across 23 communities in the GLWA system are placed on a boil water advisory as a result of the break.

August, 2022

Photo Credit: Adam Yahya Rayes/ Michigan Public



54-Inch Main Break Detroit, Michigan

A GLWA steel pipe weld fails in the middle of a densely populated neighborhood in southwest Detroit in freezing temperatures, forcing over 200 families to temporarily relocate.

February, 2025



42-Inch Main Break on 14 Mile Road
Novi, Michigan

Thousands of residents go without water due to the break's impact, with multiple cities under a boil water advisory.

September 2025



48-Inch Main Break on 14 Mile Road
Farmington Hills, Michigan

The main break places two communities on a boil water alert and triggers an inspection that exposes an additional portion of distressed main leaving two communities without water for 12–26 hours.

March 2026



42-inch Main Break
Auburn Hills, Michigan

An initial main leak leads to a full break near the entrance of a city park in Auburn Hills. Affected communities close businesses and seniors living in care facilities are relocated.

The governor declares a State of Emergency and the GLWA team distributes nearly 32,000 gallons of water.

May 2026

THE SOLUTION



FUNDING NEEDS

\$240M*
Total Annual Need

120-Inch Main Break in Fort Gratiot, August 2022

CRITICAL NEED:

To Bring Up To Standard
(Prior to 2026)

\$3.3B
Total

*Even with this level of funding failures will continue to occur until system repairs and renewals are caught up

GLWA's Pipeline Management Program

Bad Pipes – 1970's PCCP	\$1.7B
Retire Pipes – No longer needed	\$0.2B
Super Old Pipes – Past Useful Life	\$1.4B

Yearly Need to Catch Up:
(Over the next 20 years) **\$165M**

Strategic Inspection & Renewal	\$25M
Will Exceed Useful Life (Old) within 20 years	\$50M

Ongoing Yearly Need:
To keep the water system to current standard (2027 and beyond) **\$75M**
Annually

Total Yearly Need:
(2027-2047) **\$240M**



As pipe failures across our region continue to mount, our system is facing a big, bold problem and we need a big, bold solution.

Let's come together and solve this.

